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The Fourth Law of Holes

By Jack Miller

My two year old grandson, Ryan, taught me this one. We were at the beach, and his older brother was digging a hole in the sand. But Ryan kept filling it in. Great fun!

And there is a lesson here.

Let's review the Laws of Holes. It is well known that the First Law of Holes is "When you find yourself in a hole, stop digging."

Less well known, but just as important, is the Second Law of Holes: "When you stop digging, you are still in a hole." The importance of the second law has been evident in recent economic developments: the economy has stopped getting worse, but large segments of the economy are still in a hole.

If you Google Laws of Holes, you might learn something about the rules of golf. Or something about black holes. You might even find alternate versions of the Laws of

Holes. For example, according to the progressive Connecticut journal, My Left Nutmeg, George W. Bush's First Law of Holes is "When you find yourself inside of one, deny that you are in a hole" and his Second Law of Holes is "When you find yourself inside of one, keep digging." In a more hawkish view, John McCain's First Law of Holes is "When you find yourself inside of one, get a bigger shovel," while Joe Lieberman's First Law of Holes is "When you find yourself inside of one, politely move to the center of it and keep digging."

But I digress.

So, back to the Fourth Law of Holes: "If your partner is digging a hole, don't try to fill it in."

To understand this, we really need to understand the Third Law of Holes: "Holes can be good." This was explored in detail in MarketIntellbits, January 2011: [click here](#) to read. Sometimes "holes" like economic downturns force us to be smarter and more efficient. If you want to build a fence, you have to dig holes. So holes can be good. I'm sure there are golf stories that illustrate the principle, too. Certainly, a hole in one is good.

Now the Fourth Law of Holes might not apply to a couple of boys playing at the beach, but the lesson is pretty simple. We accomplish more if we work together with the same goal. If your big brother, partner, coworker, or whoever, is digging a hole, maybe that hole is good, and maybe you should help.

In business, how often do we see marketers misread their customers' needs and send the wrong message? Do you know why they buy from you? Do you know why they buy from your competitors? How often do we see Sales and Marketing sell quality while Manufacturing compromises quality to reduce cost? How often do we see Marketing promote quality while Sales is selling on price?

An internal audit can be useful in determining if everyone is on the same page, working together. If I were to ask your sales reps, why do your customers buy from you, what would they say? If I were to ask senior management, what would they say? If I ask your customers what would they say? Don't be surprised if they all give you different answers.

Market-Intell offers a proprietary Marketing Alignment Profile™ to assess whether your people are on the same page - Sales, Marketing, Manufacturing, Management. And, equally important, whether your customers are getting the message you want them to get.

For **Need to Know**™ market intelligence, call Jack Miller at 203 925 0326 or email jack.miller@market-intell.com,

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